Political Pariah or Prophetic Fulcrum?

The MYSTERY *of* ISRAEL

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The Mystery of Israel

Global Pariah or Prophetic Fulcrum?

Explore the roots of the world's #1 conflict.
Discover the history that shaped today's Middle East.
Feel God's heart to unify the broken family of Abraham.
Marvel at his plans for a new world - and for YOU.

By Denis Beauséjour



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Title: The Mystery of Israel - Political Pariah or Faithful Fulcrum?

Description: An analysis of the nation of Israel from Scriptural, historical, cultural and worldview perspectives. An examination of the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Critical Theory worldviews and their impact on the differing perspectives about Israel.

Dig behind conflicting narratives. See how the Scriptures predict and give understanding to current world events. Discover the tectonic shifts underway in the return of Jews to Israel, the religious persecution rising globally, and the battle of ideas seeking global dominance.

Subjects: Biblical history and eschatology, history of Israel, Palestinian History, worldview analysis, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, travel in Israel, languages in Israel, Judeo-Christian values, the rich tapestry of people in Israel including Israeli Jews, Messianic Jews, Israeli Arabs and Christians, Palestinian Arab Muslims and Christians, Druze and other minorities.

BISAC: RELIGION, HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY

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*** Mystery**

Used 36 times in the Bible

- Used 9 times in the Old Testament
- Only in the book of Daniel
- Hebrew "Raz"
- Meaning a secret revealed by God.

- Used 27 times in the New Testament
- Used in 10 books by Jesus, Paul and John.
- Greek "Mysterion"
- Meaning a secret part of God's will now being revealed.

*** Pariah**

Not liked, respected, or trusted.
Despised.
A leper.
An outcast.

***Fulcrum**

The point on which a lever rests or is supported.
The point on which things pivot.
That which is central.

Foreword - What is it with Israel?

"I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?"

~ Tevye, in Fiddler on the Roof

"Let me tell you something that we Israelis have against Moses. He took us 40 years through the desert to bring us to the one spot in the Middle East that has no oil!"

~ Golda Meir

Israel is a very small country, but a very big mystery.

From north to south, it is only 290 miles (470 km) long. You can snorkel the crystal-clear Red Sea at Eilat early in the morning, drive north for 6 hours through spectacular scenery and ski the lofty slopes of Mount Hermon until sunset.

From east to west, it is 71 miles wide at the widest point (115 km) and 6 miles wide at the narrowest point (10 km). That includes elevation changes from the Mediterranean sea to 3500 feet in the mountains of Samaria and Judea, down to 1400 feet below sea level at the Dead Sea.

It is sixty percent desert. As noted, there is no oil.

It represents only 0.1% of the land mass of the entire Middle East. Yet Israel gets a wildly disproportionate level of global attention. Why is that?

This book addresses that question.

Of all the books written about Israel, why read this one, written by an ordinary Gentile? I offer three reasons.

First, it is brief but comprehensive, a great starting point for those seeking to know more about the Middle East. I quote a rich variety of sources, many of which can be a perfect next step for those seeking to learn more.

Second, there are many false narratives about the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the other players in the Muslim world. I provide a reliable and condensed summary of history, with books representing each point of view for further study.

Third, I address several spiritual points of view. I show how Jews Muslims and Christians have all missed the plans of God. This book draws from the Scriptures that are recognized by each of these Abrahamic faiths.

I will give you a helpful grid to process the headlines.

But before we dive in, let me tell you who I am, why I am writing this book, and why my vantage point may be of interest to you regardless of your background and views on this subject.

I am a former Fortune 50 executive who had global responsibility for marketing and advertising. I've traveled to 60 countries and lived or worked regularly in 10, covering the spectrum of communism, capitalism, socialism, different religions and every level of economic strength and standard of living.

I nearly died in a powerful 1995 earthquake in Kobe, Japan.

I began to reevaluate my life. This led me to a search for the purpose of my life, which included reading the Qur'an, the discourses of Gautama Buddha, the Vedas of Hinduism (only partly – the table of contents is over 100 pages), and the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

Over a period of fifteen months, I was led in a dramatic way to become a follower of Jesus. I eventually left the corporate world, finished seminary and spent the next two decades in ministry leading a wonderful congregation in East Cincinnati.

Our community is filled with leaders in many fields, has a broad international missions footprint, and a deep love for the Bible. [1]

Through our global mission work, I became deeply engaged in international ministry working with committed missionaries in several countries. This led to multiple trips to Israel, and long-term relationships in the Holy Land among Jews and Muslims.

Understanding the nuances of Israel and the layers of the story through the people, the Land and the Bible helped me see things with fresh insight.

I have developed a deep love for the Jewish and Muslim people and have found much common ground that can sustain relationships of respect and mutual blessing.

There are complex historical, cultural, geographical, and spiritual roots in the Holy Land that require thoughtful understanding.

Israel is nuanced, which is a big part of her mystery.

My wife Marianne and I made our first visit to Israel in 2000. Wanting to learn more, we took a sabbatical in Jerusalem for three months in 2012. We built relationships, studied the history of Israel and traveled the Land extensively.

Since 2014, we have led eight trips to Israel, the most recent in May 2025. We have helped 150 people experience much of what you will get in this book.

In addition to nuance Israel has also become urgent.

The morning after my daughter Mariel's idyllic Cincinnati wedding on October 7, 2023, I awoke to the news that 1200 Israelis had been killed at a music festival near Gaza.

Men, women and children had been brutally murdered, raped and left with desecrated bodies by hundreds of Hamas terrorists.

This was the worst attack on Israeli soil since 1948, and the largest one-day Jewish death toll since the Holocaust. The dead included 46 Americans, and citizens of 30 countries.

Another 254 people were taken hostage in Gaza by the Hamas terrorists who have governed there since 2007.

[1] My first book, *The Biggest Idea Ever*, is an introduction to Jesus and his Kingdom. It is filled with stories of marketplace leaders and their families trading anxiety, fear and burnout for peace, purpose and significance.

The next day, Hezbollah operatives in Lebanon began an aggressive campaign of missile launches against Northern Israel. These Israeli cities look a lot like Gaza today. At one point, 200,000 Israelis were displaced from their homes, businesses, and schools.

Soon after, the Houthi's, a dominant clan and radical terror group who emerged in Yemen in the 1990's began to attack Israel and global shipping lanes with long range missiles.

All of this was funded by Iran. Why?

The Iranian leadership is seeking regional dominance in the Middle East. They want to defeat Israel, whom they call the "little Satan".

They are aligning with other autocratic regimes like China, Russia, and North Korea to defeat western values and destroy the United States, whom Iran calls the "big Satan".

That makes Israel the fulcrum for the world's #1 conflict.

The timing of this highly coordinated multi-front war seems to have been triggered by three factors.

First, the news that Saudi Arabia was close to joining the Abraham Accords and make peace with Israel. Second, Israel's internal division fueled by proposed judicial reforms. Third, the fallout from the United States' exit from Afghanistan, which fueled Islamic perception of American weakness.

The Novo concert near Gaza featured a giant inflatable Buddha, pulsing music, and alcohol and drug use. It was a big party in the isolated Re'im Forest. It's a public park without much security, located only 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Gaza border. The terrorists could strike with surprise and impunity.

The kibbutz communities near Gaza were also targets for the terrorists. Gazans who had permits to work in these Jewish farming communities earned much more than others in Gaza. They were treated as friends by the Jewish farmers. There was a history of co-existence.

In coordinated acts of shocking betrayal the Gazan workers, likely threatened by Hamas, gave the terrorists the locations of all the buildings housing the kibbutz security gear and weapons. The terrorists came with detailed maps of each community.

They knew exactly where to find and neutralize the kibbutz security teams, and where to find the families hiding in their bomb shelters.

On our recent trip, we visited two of the kibbutz communities that were attacked - Niram and Nahal-Oz. I'll share later what we saw and learned, but this was one of the most sobering experiences of my life.

This was a work of pure barbaric evil.

Over the next several weeks, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) began an invasion of Gaza to dismantle terrorist infrastructure and attempt to rescue hostages. We saw the destruction of Gaza, the agony of the hostages' families, and the rising death toll.

Demonstrations at elite American Universities broke out before Israel responded, with students cheering for the Hamas terrorists and chanting for the destruction of Israel.

Jewish students and teachers were taking cover. Few students even knew why they were there. Most were unaware of which "river and sea" they were yelling about.

Why is there so much hate for Israel? How can such an admired country on so many levels become such a focus for international condemnation?

How can American students be cheering for terrorists and the destruction of one of our most important allies?

This is the mystery of Israel.

For years, Israel has been criticized and seen as a political pariah. For others it has been a bastion of hope, the fulcrum God will use to propel the world into the future.

God's heart is grieved with the loss of life in the Holy Land. However, he is not shocked. He has told us through the prophets that his plans will be opposed.

Nevertheless, he will have his way. God will unite his human family, end war, punish evil, administer justice and usher in his Kingdom.

If you are following Jesus, I hope you will see the genius of God's plan for Israel and the nations, and that you will help others get ready for the coming events that will affect us all.

I hope that you will share this book and help people see that God is not done with Israel. He has plans for his chosen people that will bring blessing to the entire world.

If you are following Moses, I hope you will see that Adonai will be faithful in his promises. Even though difficulty lies ahead, the promise that Israel will inherit the Land is still in effect. Best of all, the promises of God also include a special person. He fills the pages of the Tanakh, and he wants you to know him.

If you are following Muhammad (peace be upon him), I hope you will see God's desire to unite the fractured family of Abraham. He will do that with the only sinless one in the Qur'an, the one whose name is above all names. He is your invitation into the Way of God.

If you have no spiritual commitments, I hope you see a few reasons to explore further. I hope you see God's plans for a new future and his personal invitation to you.

Most know Israel **was** a place of profound **history.**
Some know Israel **is** a paradox unfolding **right now.**
Few know Israel **will** host the unveiling of **eternity.**

No matter who you are, Israel will play a role in your future.

Let's discover how together.

Denis Beausejour
Cincinnati, Ohio
September 2025

Chapter 1 - Newsflash: The Holy Land Isn't Holy

"I believe that one of the reasons that I was elected President was to try to bring peace to the Holy Land."

~ Jimmy Carter

"It's way beyond ironic that a place called the Holy Land is the location of the fiercest, most deeply felt hatred in the world. It makes for wonderful theater."

~ George Carlin

Flying into Tel Aviv on a sunny morning is a rare treat. Cruising in over the Mediterranean, you see one of the deepest blue skies on earth. A beautiful stretch of beach divides the turquoise sea and a bustling metropolis.

Skyscrapers showing off a variety of architecture confirm the beauty and ingenuity of this place. That clashes with your expectation of an ancient religious vibe. You wonder how it is all going to fit together.

As you walk off the plane, you notice the tension.

The security is heavy. Your passport control interview is intense. You see military check points near the airport and again as you approach Jerusalem.

If you know what to look for, you can see security fences along the highways. Young IDF soldiers can be seen carrying their guns and patrolling in and around Jerusalem's Old City.

Office buildings and malls have metal detectors. Famous Bible cities like Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron have special directions and security gates for tourists.

As a result of the 1993 Oslo accords, Jewish citizens are not allowed to visit these famous cities now governed by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Tourists are welcome, but the foreboding red signs and check points still communicate "tension zone".

As you see more of the Holy Land, you see that it is not holy.

It has been dominated by war, intifadas, terrorist attacks, international controversy and intractable conflicts throughout its entire existence.

One key factor is that the world's three monotheistic religions collide here, often in disobedience to the ways and plans of God.

The Orthodox Jews are prominent on the West side of Jerusalem. The men are dressed in various styles of black suits, white shirts, prayer tassels, and are wearing all shapes of special black and fur hats. Each unique design signals their specific tribe. Many can be seen hurrying to study the Torah.

On Saturdays, Orthodox families in the Mea Shearim neighborhood can be seen walking. Men push their babies in strollers. Everything is peaceful until an unknowing soul drives a car down the road on the Sabbath and finds rocks being thrown at them. Vehicular stoning is a thing! No cars are allowed on Sabbath now. ☺

To travel into the Jewish quarter of the Old City and get near the Western Wall, you must go through a security checkpoint. Ditto between the Muslim and Jewish Quarters.

The East side of the Old City is mainly Muslim. Walking through the Damascus gate, you are swallowed into a sea of busy shoppers. Merchants are shouting prices back and forth and the happy chaos of Arab bargain-hunting eclipses your every thought.

On Fridays, as you work your way through the Muslim Quarter, you see shops closing and hundreds scurrying to the Temple Mount mosques for the major weekly prayer service at noon.

The Imam's message is broadcast loudly. Tension fills the air. The IDF soldiers stand guard stoically at several pinch points surrounding the Temple Mount.

Adjacent to the Muslim Quarter is the Christian Quarter. On special days like Palm Sunday, a procession of thousands moves down the Mount of Olives into the Kidron valley and up to the northeastern edge of the Old City.

Entering through the Lion gate (aka Saint Stephen's Gate), the throng walks through the edge of the Muslim Quarter towards the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This is where the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth took place.

The Christians sing and wave Palm branches. They stream by the spot where the IDF soldiers were keeping the peace on Friday. The first few stations of the Cross are in the very same area. But all is not well in the Christian Quarter either, especially as you stand in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

There, you will notice a wooden ladder beneath one of the main windows. That ladder has been there since 1728, when an attempted repair of a broken window sparked a major turf war.

It is a pitiful example of the long-standing pattern of disputes between the six denominations that share this historic church building and its labyrinth of rooms, displays and chapels.

The last six "stations of the cross" depicting key points in the Passion of Jesus are housed in that huge, shared complex.

There have been so many fights between the denominations that no one dares move the ladder. In 2008 there were monks in a fist fight captured on the evening news. Christian disunity is so bad that the keys to open and close the building have been in the hands of a Muslim family since the seventh century.

Every Friday the Muslims gather in their mosques. Loudspeakers call the faithful to prayer. Imams read the Qur'an pray and preach.

Every Saturday, the Jewish synagogues are full. The faithful read the Torah, listen to the Rabbi and pray.

Every Sunday, the Christians gather as the churches ring their bells. Regulars sing worship songs, the Scriptures are read, and the pastors preach.

Every weekend, the tension rotates. Friday for Muslims, Saturdays for Jews and Sundays for Christians. The young IDF soldiers stand guard over the powder keg.

At the intersection of the Muslim and Christian Quarters, opposite where the IDF stand guard, there is a glimmer of hope.

It is Basti Restaurant and Cafe, owned by a third-generation Israeli Muslim Arab restaurateur named Anwar. It is a delicious oasis, serving frozen lemonade seasoned with fresh mint leaves and an amazing variety of Mediterranean dishes served with zeal and salesmanship.

Every time we visit Israel, we go there. Isaac our third-generation Jewish tour guide and Anwar embrace, laugh and eat together while our tour group eats. These two families have known each other for 60 years. Genuine friendship, respect and peace flow between them. It is a picture of shalom, telling us that once people get to know each other there is hope.

I love having lunch at Basti Café.

My wife Marianne and I made our first trip to Israel in early 2000. We were part of a church tour organized by a pastor friend. That trip left us totally confused.

Our tour guide was a wonderful Jewish woman who knew the Bible inside out. At each site, she spoke from memory and quoted dates and events at the ruins we were seeing, with all the relevant Bible verses from the Old and New Testaments.

Yet, despite having all this information and archaeological proof, she was not the least bit spiritual. All of this knowledge was not affecting her way of life. It was a complete mystery.

The crazy thing about Israel is that most Jews do not really know their whole story. Many live in ignorance of their ancient Biblical history. God's promises of the Land and blessing to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are generally known. But the checkered history of their ancestors and the lessons of the Bible are not.

Israel today is mostly a secular nation focused on survival, innovation and making a better life. Despite this, there are signs that the Bible is still important even if not fully understood.

The Shrine of the Book is one such public sign. This museum to the central role of God's word in Israel's history sits in plain view of the Knesset in Jerusalem. Knesset means "assembly". [2] This is where Israel's elected leaders meet, and key government offices are located. The symbolism is powerful.

There is a high communal awareness of the Sabbath, and a noticeable slowdown in activity all over the country. Restaurants and stores close Friday afternoon around 3 pm. Hotels turn on their Shabbat elevators, which stop at every floor, up and down, so the observant do not have to push buttons or activate electricity to get to the dining rooms or to return to their rooms.

Otherwise, it would be considered work.

Most Jews believe in the need for their own country because many have emigrated from countries hostile to Jews. Those born in Israel see the hatred for Israel in the news locally and internationally. They have seen and experienced antisemitism and have come to Israel to be safe, accepted and to build a better life.

[2] Beit Knesset (house for assembly) is the Hebrew term for synagogue.

They believe in the modern state of Israel, in technology, in working together for their families and communities. They believe in the IDF and are bound together uniquely by their mandatory military service.

While there is a national unity made practical by the observance of the major Biblical feasts like Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, it can feel a bit like Christmas and Easter in the United States, with traditions superseding spirituality.

As much as the nation has been held together by Jewish traditions, one comes away surprised that more of the people don't really understand and practice their faith. There seems to be a veil over the Jewish people.

They are not alone in missing the plans of God.

The Muslims have misjudged God's commitment to the Jewish people and have found themselves experiencing stunning losses in their efforts to destroy Israel. The Arab nations surrounding Israel – Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq – have initiated multiple wars and have been defeated every time.

The assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard in a military guesthouse in Tehran during the inauguration of Iran's President Pezeshkian was another story of Biblical proportions. So was the surprise attack on thousands of Hezbollah operatives with pager and walkie talkie explosions.

Iran saw some gains in their proxy wars with Israel. However, a stunning Israeli 12-day counterattack in June of 2025 destroyed much of Iran's air defense capabilities, weapons manufacturing sites, rocket launchers, and nuclear sites. Another stunning chapter in a long history of underdog Israeli victories.

Here is what Isaiah said about his chosen people:

"See, it is I who created the blacksmith
who fans the coals into flame
and forges a weapon fit for its work.
And it is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc;
no weapon forged against you will prevail,
and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.
This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord,
and this is their vindication from me,"
declares the Lord.[3]

These Muslim miscalculations continue to pile up.

Gaza is destroyed, the once stunning land of Lebanon is destroyed, Syria has fallen into chaos, much of Yemen's ports are destroyed, and the regime in Iran has been catastrophically weakened by Israel's responses to the constant multi-front attacks.

[3] Isaiah 54:16-17, NIV - bold emphasis mine.

The people under these regimes are suffering because their leaders refuse to live in peace with Israel. It's been said: "If the Arab world laid down their weapons, there would be no more violence. If Israel laid down their weapons, there would be no more Israel." [4]

The refugees from these war defeats currently remain in Gaza and parts of Judea and Samaria (aka the West Bank). An estimated 6 million Arab refugees live in squalor and have no place to go. They are treated like pawns by their own leaders, and by the Arab world, enforced by threats and money. Families of those who die in jihad still receive generous payments and honor.

During the War of Israeli independence, the Arab nations expelled 800,000 Jews, who were all welcomed by Israel. The same Arab nations who expelled Jews refused to take responsibility for meaningful numbers of the displaced Arab refugees.

But Muslims are not alone in missing God's plans.

The Christian world has badly misjudged God's unwavering commitment to the Jewish people, embracing the spirit of antisemitism and Bible interpretations that declare the Church to be the replacement for Israel as God's chosen people.

This has resulted in churches jumping on the bandwagon of boycotting Israeli products and companies, divesting pension investments in Israel, and asking for sanctions against Israel.

These boycott divestiture and sanction efforts are known as the BDS movement. The BDS efforts have often harmed the Palestinian people they claim to protect.

For example, there was a major outcry against SodaStream, an Israeli company selling appliances to make carbonated drinks at home. Their factory was in a Jewish community in Judea, which the BDS activists opposed.

Due to BDS pressure, the company closed the plant and relocated to the Negev desert. There were 600 Palestinians working in jobs that paid well above other available jobs in the West Bank, and the company also provided transportation.

Owing to distance and security issues, only about 130 Palestinians are employed in the relocated plant. This is a classic case of incomplete information and unintended consequences. The reports of excellent working relationships between Israeli and Palestinian employees have not been shared in the media.

The BDS movement is antisemitic and poorly informed. They are raising support from the International community with incomplete and misleading information.

These efforts are in active opposition to the plans of God.

Many of the churches supporting the BDS movement have departed from the Scriptures, denying the authority of God's Word in critical areas of faith and practice.

[4] Spoken by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The BDS effort is in denial of God's promises to Israel and the actual impact they are having on the Palestinians. They are only getting in the way of the possibilities for lasting economic cooperation and the benefits of Israeli investment.

These Muslim and Christian attitudes have fed the approval of violence against Israel. In an incredible turnabout from reality, the international community has blamed the Muslim violence against Israel as being caused by Israel.

There has been moral equivalency made between a sovereign nation and terrorist organizations. The number of UN resolutions against Israel dwarfs the total of such resolutions against known inhumane authoritarian governments like North Korea, China, and Russia.

Seeing students on American campuses speaking Jew hatred and support for Hamas is shocking. These views are opposed to our country's values and history with Israel.

Sadly, even three top University Presidents had no acceptable definition of antisemitism when questioned by the Congress. Later, I will explore the forces shaping these attitudes.

One of the main drivers of anti-Israel sentiment has been the United Nations. In addition to the barrage of anti-Israel resolutions, the UN set up the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) to manage only the Palestinian refugees.

The UNWRA is operating according to a totally different set of rules compared to all other refugees, who are managed under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The UNWRA has granted multi-generational "rights of return" to Palestinian refugees since 1949, whereas UNHCR "rest of the world" refugees are given one generation to decide where they will resettle. This "right of return" has been a central problem in the mushrooming of refugees over the last 75 years. It has no basis or precedent in International law. [5]

This has led to a disproportionate focus on Palestinian refugees. For example, there is far less global interest in twice the number of Syrian refugees. Why is one Arab group receiving so much attention compared to a problem twice the size?

By the actions of the UNWRA, the problem of 700,000 refugees in 1949 has become 6 million. As we will see, most of these refugees voluntarily left their homes at the urging of Arab leadership.

The recent news from Gaza that the UNWRA has been infiltrated by Hamas terrorists is yet another barrier to the placement of these refugees in a just and beneficial way.

Yet, progress has been made between Israel and the Arab world.

The peace treaty with Egypt has held since 1979. Relations between Israel and Jordan were normalized in 1994. Israel provides fresh water to Jordan, and technical assistance to improve agriculture yields with their drip irrigation technology.

[5] *The War of Return*, pages x-xii

The Abraham accords signed in late 2020 fully normalized relations between Israel and Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Morocco. This is signaling a growing acceptance of Israel's right to exist throughout the Arab world.

We all should hope that every Arab nation will follow suit.

The Israeli border fence and inspection stations have dramatically reduced the incidence of terrorist attacks in Israel. The deployment of the Iron Dome air missile defense system has rendered most of the terrorists' missiles impotent, albeit at great cost.

At the end of our sabbatical in November 2012, we were visiting our friends' home in a suburb near Jerusalem. I was out with our friends' three children playing at a nearby playground while the other adults were in the house preparing dinner.

The sirens started blaring and their oldest, a 7-year-old boy knew immediately what to do. He yelled, "We need to run to the bomb shelter right now!" as his training at school kicked in. I scooped up the 2-year-old and followed the older two running ahead.

As I ran up the stairs to their apartment, I looked to the playground about 300 yards away and saw a missile land in a vacant valley next to the small community and explode. This was the first time sirens had been heard in Jerusalem in a very long time.

Hamas had been supplied with longer range rockets.

As the sirens still blared, we huddled in their bomb shelter, outfitted with water, gas masks and flashlights. We spent the next 15 minutes in there before the "all clear" signal was given by text and soon after, no more sirens.

This is life in Israel. There are bomb shelters in every home, office, restaurant, hotel, and school. Since every shot of the Iron Dome is so expensive, they track the missiles and those that will land in open areas are allowed to land and explode.

The Holy Land has been in a state of continuous war for almost 100 years. There is violence all around and so many opposed to God's plans, achieving their goals by bullying and murder.

God knows how to handle bullies.

Those who repent of their sin are warmly welcomed into God's family. Those who refuse will face punishment. [6]

The constant attacks and never-ending wars have brought challenges of keeping Israel's military and security responses measured. Despite efforts to protect non-combatants, Israeli soldiers have made mistakes and there have been incidents of unnecessary violence. Most of the time, correction is swift.

Recently a unit of Israeli soldiers reading the story from the book of Esther during the feast of Purim fired their weapons in the air. They were disciplined and the commander was removed. God's chosen ones are human like us, and they are held accountable by God to the ways of God.

[6] Proverbs 29:1 says, "Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed - without remedy." (NIV)

The Holy Land is not holy. Tension and violence abound.

We know this grieves the heart of God.[7] He is looking for people who will love him enough to see his ways and to bring his ways into the Land.

God will accomplish that purpose.

We need to see things from his perspective. This is his world and his story. We can rejoice in the small pictures of hope in the Land today, but we need a wholesale change of heart.

That has been God's plan all along.

Let's start with history and turn our attention to the story of Israel, as told in the Torah and the Prophets.

Let's explore some of the roots of today's problems!

Discussion Questions:

1. What news sources are informing your views on Israel?

2. Which Jewish, Christian, or Muslim friends could help you learn more about this conflict?

[7] See Genesis 6:5-6, NIV